

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON  
THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

April 12, 2024

The Honorable Lina M. Khan  
Chairwoman  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Chairwoman Khan:

I write today on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Andy Parker, and his request to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate Meta and Google for their failure to adequately remove videos depicting the tragic murders on live TV of Ms. Alison Parker (Mr. Parker's daughter) and Mr. Adam Ward. This letter comes four years after Mr. Parker submitted his initial complaint against Google, and three and a half years since he submitted his complaint against Meta. I request an update on these two complaints and implore the FTC to thoroughly evaluate best practices to ensure social media platforms uphold their own Terms of Service, especially their policies for violent and harmful content.

In August 2015, Ms. Alison Parker, a TV news reporter, and Mr. Adam Ward, a cameraman for CBS-affiliated WDBJ in Roanoke, Virginia, were shot and killed by a former colleague during a live broadcast. The footage of this incident was captured by the perpetrator, and the live news broadcast was uploaded to several online platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Since then, Mr. Parker has fought to have these videos removed from these platforms. In response, Meta and Google instructed Mr. Parker to individually flag and report each video of the murders on their platforms.

Subsequently, Mr. Parker, close family members, and volunteers acting on their behalf have repeatedly and individually reported videos depicting this horrific incident on all three platforms. For instance, the Coalition For A Safer Web has flagged videos of Alison's murder for years, and as of July 2023, continues to find these videos widely accessible.<sup>1</sup> Despite these efforts, only some of these reported videos have been removed, and many remain viewable on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The remaining videos still violate the platforms' Terms of Service and fail to provide consumers with a user experience free from harmful content, as the platforms claim.

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<sup>1</sup> Feinberg, Eric. "Alison Parker's Murder Video Still Appearing on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube." Coalition For A Safer Web, July 27, 2023. <https://coalitionsw.org/alison-parkers-murder-video-still-appearing-on-facebook-instagram-and-you-tube/>.

Mr. Parker and the Georgetown University Law Clinic filed their first complaint regarding this case four years ago. Unfortunately, Mr. Parker continues to suffer because companies like Google and Meta are still hosting content depicting this tragic incident on their platforms. I am also concerned by the approach taken by these platforms, which shifts the burden of finding and removing content in violation of the platform's Terms of Service onto murder victims' families. I believe platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, should be responsible for promptly removing reported content that violates the platforms' Terms of Service.

I urge the FTC to promptly respond to Mr. Parker's complaints and work closely with Mr. Parker to address his concerns. I also encourage the FTC to explore all possible avenues to ensure that companies like Google and Meta provide consumers with an experience free from violent and harmful content as claimed by their Terms of Service.

I look forward to engaging with your agency regarding Mr. Parker's complaints and appreciate your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

